

GERMANS FEAR COLLAPSE OF AUSTRIA WESTWARD BOUND TRANSPORT SUNK

SHATTERED ON ROCK OF ITALIAN RESISTANCE

Austrian Offensive Turned Into Retreat From Montello to Sea by Steadfast Tactics of Defenders.

Awakening of the Italian Morale of Even More Moment Than Enemy's Defeat—Eight Days' Heavy Fighting Turns for Allies.

(Associated Press)

Disaster seems to be written in the news of the Austrian defeat along the Piave.

Unable to force his way farther than the immediate vicinity of the west bank of the river, and with bridges thrown across the stream swept away by the swirling waters of the flood pouring down from the mountains, the enemy began a precipitous retreat Saturday night.

So hasty was his withdrawal that he left a good many cannon on the western bank of the Piave, while his retreating infantry columns, according to news dispatches are already being pressed by Italian detachments thrown over the easterly side of the stream.

Italy's victory over the Austrians on the Piave front appears likely to assume the proportions of a veritable triumph for the Italians and a disaster of great magnitude for the defeated enemy.

Already it is announced in official dispatches from Rome the Austrians have lost 45,000 men in prisoners and great quantities of material, while the extent of their other casualties may be indicated by the thousands of bodies floating in the waters of the swollen river.

Shattered on the rock of Italian resistance the Austrian offensive has turned into a retreat, and from Montello to the sea the enemy is hurrying back across the Piave before the closely pursuing Italians.

Austria's defeat is being hailed throughout Italy and allied countries not so much because of the Italian victory but because of the awakening of the Italian morale which was shaken severely last fall by the Austro-German offensive. Holding the final barriers to the Venetian plain and Lombardy the Italians by their steadfast resistance during eight days of heavy fighting turned the great enemy onslaught into a disorderly repulse.

From the Montello plateau southward to the Adriatic comes the same story of the Austrian retreat. The Piave river formerly emptied into the sea quite near Venice, but in recent years its course was changed to its present location. In the first rush of the Austrian offensive the enemy succeeded in crossing the old river bed, which now is a canal. From their positions there the foe has been driven and the Italians are relentlessly pursuing them.

Forlorn Hops for Days.

The last news dispatches from the Piave river, sent out on Sunday, tell of Italian bombing units being thrown across the main stream of the Piave, which seems to indicate that the Austrian retreat was not stayed at the eastern bank of the river.

There is every indication that the Austrian "hunger offensive" has been a forlorn hope for several days. The effect of the defeat on the internal conditions of Austria-Hungary, when once the news is made public, can only be conjectured, but it may be that the Italians have hit the enemy a harder blow than that merely involved in the military feat of pushing him back across the Piave.

Coincident with the Italian victory on the Piave comes the news of the Italian units on the Marne-Rhin sector repulsing a second heavy German attack on the heights of Bigny, just to the west of the city of Rheims. The German failure was complete as was the original blow on Saturday night.

Whether the several enemy divisions on the western bank of the Piave will be able to escape capture or destruction

tion in attempting to get across the Piave to the opposite bank will be the most interesting development of the next few hours. The river is swollen and Vienna, in its latest communication, seems to be preparing the way for unwelcome news. It dilates at length on the burdens placed on the troops by the heavy rains and the torments of the Piave. Most of the Austrian bridges are gone and the Italian heavy artillery is still within range at points where the Austrians crossed and near the river bank where the Italian line has held fast.

Pressed With Ardor.

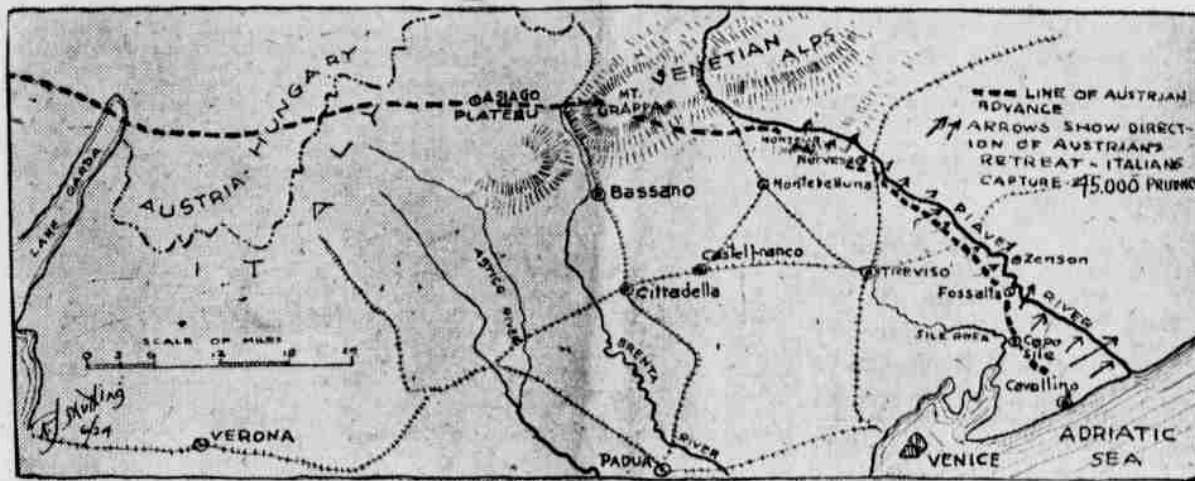
Undoubtedly Gen. Diaz's men realize the predicament of the enemy and their pursuit of the fleeing Austrians will be pressed with ardor. In withdrawing from Montello the enemy probably will meet with as much difficulty as in getting out of the rain-soaked lowlands along the lower reaches of the Piave. To add to the troubles of the Austrian command, their advance across the Piave have been on unconnected sectors, with the Italians holding the sectors in between.

Little Infantry Fighting.

Previous to the beginning of the enemy retreat there had been little infantry fighting along the Piave for forty-eight hours. The Italians had occupied the time in shelling the enemy lines and communications heavily. In the mountains the situation is unchanged although the allied artillery has been very active in some sectors. Austrian official claims of 40,000 prisoners and of allied air losses are declared to be falsifications in a semi-official note issued in Rome. It is asserted that the Italian losses in killed, wounded and missing aggregate 40,000. The Austrian losses are placed at

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SCENE OF AUSTRIAN DEFEAT WITH LOSS OF 45,000 PRISONERS



CAPTURE OF 45,000 AUSTRIANS AND ENORMOUS STORES REPORTED BY ROME

(Associated Press)

Washington, June 24.—Capture of 45,000 prisoners and enormous stores of war material by the Italians in their counter-offensive which has driven the Austrians across the Piave is announced in an official cablegram received today by the Italian embassy from Rome.

GERMANS HURRY TO BATTLE LINES

With Purpose Restoring Austrian Morale and Checking Italian Counter-Blow.

COMPLETE COLLAPSE

Probable, Kaiser Aware—Huns Plan to Break Through to Venetian Plains.

(Associated Press.)

Washington, June 24.—The Germans are said to be thoroughly awake to the probability of a complete collapse of the Austro-Hungarian government, already struggling with a half-starved and riotous people, in the event of a complete Austrian rout at the hands of the Italians.

Realization of this fact, Rome believes, has caused the German general staff practically to suspend its offensive in France, as has been evidenced by the comparative quiet there for the past week.

German soldiers are being rushed by rail to the northern end of the Austro-Italian battle lines with the purpose of restoring Austrian morale and not only checking the Italian counter attack, but by force of numbers, breaking through the mountain passes into the plains of Venetia.

With such help as the entente armies can give immediately supplemented as rapidly as transportation can be had by troops directly from America and by ample military supplies and food, the Italian general staff is reported to be convinced that the victorious sweep of the Italian army will traverse the famous Bainsizza plateau and will not stop until the Italians have reclaimed all of the country up to the right bank of the Isonzo, which marked the extreme of Gen. Cadorna's advance.

Losses Extremely Heavy. Rome, June 24.—Extremely heavy losses in men and material have been suffered by the Austro-Hungarian army in the defeat which the Italians have administered to them on the Piave front, the war office announced today. The enemy has been driven from the entire west bank of the Piave, except at one point, and was able to cross the river only under the deadly fire of the Italian artillery.

The number of prisoners actually counted up to today exceeded 40,000. The Austrian dead cover the ground of the battle in extraordinary numbers.

The text of the statement reads: "Yesterday gave us the crowning results of victory. Pushed up against the bank of the Piave in a strip of ground ever becoming narrower, bombarded without pause by our artillery and airplanes, the enemy, after having maintained himself desperately for eight days at the price of enormous sacrifices on the right bank of the river, began on the night of June 22-23 his withdrawal to the left bank of the river."

(Associated Press.)

London, June 24.—William M. Hughes, the Australian premier, upon the conclusion of the imperial conference in London will go to the United States to place before President Wilson a full and frank statement of Australia's policy regarding the Monroe doctrine for the Pacific, according to the Liverpool Post. He will ask, says this newspaper, for the support and cooperation of the United States in maintaining such a policy.

Irresistible Impetus.

"Offensive operations by our troops began Sunday," says the dispatch. "After violent artillery preparations that destroyed all bridges except one, the infantry drove forward with irresistible impetus. The flooded Piave contains thousands of enemy corpses. Divisions which had passed the Piave were decimated by our artillery and infantry. Montello was attacked in three columns. Enemy lines were broken at Cella Della Madonna and Nerves and recaptured. From Maserada to Sordana the Austrians first resisted our attacks desperately, but finally were forced to retreat to the left bank. Battle continues fiercely in the Sordana sector. Forty-five thousand prisoners and enormous booty were captured by the Italians."

Lieut. Young's Victory.

"American airmen displayed great bravery in the first encounters. Lieut. Young attacked by two Austrian fighters, was obliged to land on the lower Piave."

Great Blow In Few Hours

Lloyd George Declares Next Few Days At Longest May See Decisive Battle.

(Associated Press.)

London, June 24.—Premier Lloyd George announced today that the next couple of months would be anxious ones. There might be a great blow coming in the next few hours, he said, and certainly in the next few days, and on this blow the issue of the campaign might depend. The entente allies, he added, never felt better prepared to meet it.

SUPPLY SHIP AFIRE RESULT EXPLOSION

(Associated Press.)

An Atlantic Port, June 24.—A big passenger steamer being used by the government as a supply ship was almost completely destroyed by fire following an explosion early Saturday morning. It became known here only today. The name of the vessel was withheld.

The ship was at anchor and all on board are reported to have escaped with the exception of two of the crew, who have not been accounted for.

The explosion shattered windows for miles around.

Only the smokestack and superstructure of the vessel are now visible above the water.

WAR DEPARTMENT ASKS NINETY TROOP SHIPS

(Associated Press.)

Washington, June 24.—Ninety new troop ships asked for by the war department have been included in the enlarged building program of the shipping board. This was disclosed today in a report submitted to the senate on the revised \$2,000,000,000 sundry civil appropriation bill.

FAIR, SAYS BILLY 'POSSUM

Never try to cross between a woman and a 10-cent store. It looks like those Austrians are going to spoil everything before we can get there. The first thing you know we'll have to be sending them food to keep 'em fighting until we can deliver the sort of licking we're planning. The weather? Fair and moderately warm tonight and Tuesday.

TRANSPORT SUNK OFF DELAWARE

No Troops Aboard—Ship Was Westward-Bound When Torpedoed.

67 OF CREW ARE MISSING

Total of 81 Rescued—U-Boat Not Sighted Until Vessel Was Struck.

(Associated Press.)

Washington, June 24.—Sinking of an allied transport under American charter on June 18 about 700 miles east of the Delaware capes was reported today to the navy department. The transport had no troops aboard and was westward bound.

Reports indicate that the submarine was not seen until after the torpedo struck the ship. The crew took to the boats after the vessel settled and it was futile to use the guns. The U-boat appeared on the surface and fired nineteen shots into the ship.

Three Boats Missing. Three boats with about 67 members of the crew are missing. The crew of 148 got away from the vessel in seven boats, four of which have been landed. The total rescued so far is given as 81. Two boatloads arrived by steamer at New York, one by steamer at Hampton Roads, and one by sailing vessel at Bermuda.

Under an agreement with the British admiralty the navy department is not permitted to announce the name of the vessel sunk. Unofficial reports have reached here from New York that she was the Dwinik, a British steamer formerly under the Russian flag.

In view of the fact that the vessel was attacked far outside the European zone of submarine activities, some officials here think she may have encountered a submarine heading for home after participating in the raid on the American coast.

Formerly Russian Vessel.

New York, June 24.—The British transport Dwinik, formerly a Russian steamer, 3,173 tons, is reported in marine circles to have been sunk by a German submarine. She is believed to have been bound for the United States.

MISSISSIPPI STEAMER EAGLE SUNK AT KEY WEST

(Associated Press.)

A Gulf Port, June 24.—The Mississippi river steamer Eagle, which left this port Saturday bound for Cartagena, Colombia, sank near Key West yesterday, according to information reaching local shipping agents today. The Eagle was towed by a steamer, and its crew was taken off by the towing vessel and landed at Key West. There is no information as to how the boat sank.

(Associated Press.)

New York, June 24.—In an east side street filled with pedestrians, three footpads today succeeded in wrenching from William Fabris, a messenger for the Cosmopolitan bank, his satchel containing \$485 in cash and a certified check for \$52. While one grasped him about the neck another gagged him and a third made off with the satchel. All of the robbers escaped in the crowd.

RETREAT ON PIAVE FRONT BEGAN IN COVER DARKNESS

Cannon Left Behind—Austrian Troops Sought to Employ Machine Guns to Set Up Barrage Fire.

Italian Attack Insistent All Along Line From Montello to Mouth of River—Americans in Notable Part.

(Associated Press)

Italian Army Headquarters, Sunday, June 23 (Night).—The great retreat by the Austrians along the Piave front began under cover of darkness on Saturday night. The retreating troops left their cannon behind them.

Italian detachments are pursuing the enemy east of the Piave.

Austrian troops left to cover the retreat used their machine guns to set up a barrage fire.

When it was observed that the Austrians had begun a retrograde movement the Italians began to attack virtually all along the Piave line from Montello on the north well towards the mouth of the river. The attack was quickly pressed and became more insistent, accompanied by violent artillery fire.

The number of guns left behind by the Austrians as they retreated has not been computed, but is said to be very great.

The work of the American aviators who appeared on the front last week for the first time contributed notably to the disorganization of the Austrian forces which had crossed the Piave, according to Raffaele Garinei, correspondent of the Milan Ecolo.

Flood Came Too Late.

Italian Army Headquarters, June 23.—(Afternoon.)—(By the Associated Press.)—Crucially harassed by steady and accurate artillery fire, compelled to face bayonet attacks by the Italians and being constantly bombed by allied aviators flying low in defiance of machine gun and the antiaircraft fire, the Austrians have been fighting recently with the courage of despair. Local counter-attacks have been launched without regard for losses, against the allied trenches on the Montello plateau, but have been everywhere broken by the steady resistance interposed to the foe's progress. The crest of the Piave river flood passed yesterday but the falling waters came too late to relieve the positions of the Austrians. The inundation went sixteen feet above the low-water mark.

No Victory Chants.

Along the lower Piave Italian pressure has been constant. The tired enemy has been given no rest, although the fighting has been intermittent, owing to the fact that neither side has been able to see more than fifty yards through the heavy bushes and tall swamp grasses growing in the lowlands.

The heroic deeds of the Italians in the fighting upon the Carso plateau east of the Isonzo are recalled by the repeated examples of valor and endurance shown in the present struggle. With the Italian armies along the front there is only a stern intention to do or die. There is no effervescent boasting, no victory chants, but a realization that harder fighting may yet come.

"The word 'Piave' is being written in blood-red letters on Austrian hearts," said a dust-covered, sweat-stained Italian officer, who has been fighting every day for a week, with scarcely any rest save for Friday and Saturday's lull in the mighty contest for the banks of the river.

"We are saving the shouting until Austria's plunder expedition is defeated," said 70-year-old Deputy Banquette, who is spending his time as an Alpine officer, tramping to and fro among the soldiers, telling them that victory is the one way to secure peace.

Behind the lines the civil population is undisturbed, there being but few refugees. The cities are calm. The American colony at Venice has been reduced to a handful, consisting of the American consul and the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. workers.

On the mainland, however, Americans are becoming more plentiful, due to the influx of Red Cross helpers and officers of the American military mission. The third hospital units of the American army, under command of Col. Elbert E. Johnson, have arrived. The American aviators, in their jaunty uniforms with the golden flying eagle, are attracting most friendly attention. They are regarded with smiling eyes even by the roughest soldiers.

ENGINEER ASLEEP AT POST OWING TO ILLNESS

Michigan Central Attorney Explains Crash of Empty Troop and Circus Trains.

(Associated Press.)

Hammond, Ind., June 24.—Attorney Charles J. McFadden, representing the Michigan Central, issued a statement today explaining that Engineer Alonzo Sargent, of the empty troop train which crashed into a circus train near Gary Saturday, was asleep, owing to illness, and did not see the signals of danger. Sargent, he said, remained near the wreck for six hours, and then, being worn out, left for Kalamazoo.

At the inquest Attorney McFadden said the engineer was asleep for three miles. Gustav Klaus, Sargent's fireman, testified that he was busy shoveling coal almost to the moment of the accident. He saw a red flare burning and heard the fuses which Oscar Timm, flagman, said he threw, hit the cab window on the engineer's side. Two minutes later the crash came, he said. Conductor R. W. Johnson and Brakeman Curtis Aust, of the circus train, testified that the danger signals were plainly visible against a clear sky.

It was promised that Sargent would appear tomorrow and recess was taken until that time.

SEPARATE TAX FOR OIL INDUSTRY IS URGED

(International News Service.)

Washington, June 24.—Separate tax provisions for the oil industry in the matter of income and excess profits taxes, were urged by Judge John J. Shaw, of Tulsa, Okla., representing the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas association before the house ways and means committee this afternoon. This would allow the unusual conditions of the oil business to be considered, he said. He agreed to draft a scheme of taxation agreeable to the oil producers for the guidance of the committee.

WOULD EXTEND DRAFT TO MEN BETWEEN 18 AND 45

(Associated Press.)

Washington, June 24.—An amendment to the \$12,000,000 army appropriation bill proposing to extend the army draft to men between 18 and 45 years was introduced today by Senator Fall, of New Mexico. Consideration of the amendment, which would exempt those under 21 from duty in the firing line, was postponed.